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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1197
INFO RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0937
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0779
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0860
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 0072
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 0036
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR PRIORITY 0088
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 0077
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JCS WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAAIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1352
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 000236

NOFORN
SIPDIS

DEAPT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/INS, AND SCA/PB

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TAGS: PREL PTER EAID KDEM IN PK IR XD UK

SUBJECT: INDIA: MILIBAND'S TOUR D'HORIZON WITH GOI OFFICIALS

REF: A. NEW DELHI 118

1B. LONDON DAILY ITEM - 20 JAN 09

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Classified By: Richard Mills, reasons 1.4 (b/d).

11. (C/NF) Summary. In spite of the significant Indian media criticism of Foreign Secretary Miliband's comments on Kashmir during his January 13-15 visit to India (reftels), he had an opportunity for useful discussions with Indian leaders on key policy and regional issues, including Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, Burma, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the London Economic Summit. FCO India Team leader Neil Kernohan said January 26 that Miliband did not discuss any major bilateral issues with Indian interlocutors. End Summary.

Mumbai Bombings/Pakistan

12. (C/NF) Kernohan said Miliband was struck by how closely all Indian leaders, including Prime Minister Singh and Foreign Minister Mukherjee, spoke from the same script on the Mumbai bombings. Amongst Indian leaders, there was deep concern and anger at Pakistan's lack of serious action and merely "cosmetic" gestures. Singh commented to Miliband that he had invested political capital in improving relations with Pakistan and that had been destroyed. Singh said that if India were attacked again, it would react, without indicating any specific actions. Mukherjee made it clear to Miliband, according to Kernohan, that unless and until Pakistan took meaningful action, the GOI would not receive any high level visitors from Pakistan and would not support a joint investigation into the Mumbai bombings.

13. (C/NF) Miliband praised Singh and Mukherjee for India's restraint and indicated that the UK had no evidence to suggest that the GOP was officially involved in the bombings. Miliband reiterated that civilian elements of the GOP wanted to prosecute the attackers and suggested that those prosecutions should be the test for re-engagement, not extradition of the suspects to India. Mukherjee agreed that the GOI was looking at that as a way to move forward in its relations with Pakistan.

Iran

14. (C/NF) Miliband told Mukherjee that 2009 was a critical year in engagement with Iran on nuclear issues. According to Kernohan, Miliband had the impression that the GOI understood the urgency but wanted to proceed with diplomatic negotiations. Mukherjee said the GOI did not think that sanctions would work and that more work needs to be done to convince Russia and China to use their influence. Mukherjee reiterated that it was important to ensure that Iran does not succeed in its nuclear aspirations.

Afghanistan

15. (C/NF) Mukherjee told Miliband that Afghan President Karzai's recent visit to India had been good. Karzai had agreed with the GOI on the need to work together on regional stability. Karzai also agreed that it is in the GOI and GOA's mutual interest to combat extremism "where ever it is," which Kernohan said GOI officials took to mean support for their efforts to pressure the international community to urge Pakistan to do more on its extremists networks.

Burma

16. (C/NF) Miliband told Mukherjee that he had recently urged United Nations SYG Ban Ki-Moon to use his coming visit to Burma, on the margins of the ASEAN Summit, to increase political pressure for reform in Burma. Mukherjee said that

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the GOI assessed that there was not currently enough political dissent in Burma to leverage movement on the internal political agenda. Mukherjee described India's relations with Burma as "positive," given the increasing trade and the joint work on tackling insurgents along their mutual border.

Bangladesh

17. (C/NF) Mukherjee told Miliband the GOI was pleased with Bangladesh's elections. The new government was representative of "youthful Bangladesh."

Sri Lanka

18. (C/NF) Mukherjee told Miliband he continued to be concerned by the human rights situation in Sri Lanka and with the way the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) use civilians as human shields. Mukherjee said provisions need to be made to get civilians out of hot zones and that the Government of Sri Lanka needs to use devolution of authority as an element of a political settlement to the conflict. Miliband noted his concerns that the Sri Lanka military may also be involved in human rights violations.

London Economic Summit

19. (C/NF) Singh told Miliband that he hoped the Financial Stability Forum would meet at the April Economic Summit in London. Miliband reiterated that the Summit would follow up on the agenda begun in Washington and that Prime Minister Brown would be issuing invitations in the coming days. Singh said he hoped to attend.

TUTTLE